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PRESS RELEASE

USAID Provides Trainings to Nurses on Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses

From June 11-16, 2007, nurses from the Magtimguly Etrap of the Balkan Welayat attended training on Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI), organized by the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) primary health care reform project ZdravPlus.

The training is part of series, conducted by the USAID ZdravPlus and Healthy Family projects in accordance with the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan (MOHMIT) Prikaz #115 of October 17, 2006. The training aims to improve primary health care provided by family nurses. The idea for training nurses in IMCI is supported by the National Maternal and Child Institute.

The two USAID projects launched the training series in November 2006 by training 16 nurses from Ashgabat to facilitate training sessions. Together with these new instructors, 11 rollout trainings were conducted for nurses across the country. Each training consists of a six-day course with practical sessions in counseling and interpersonal communication skills, required for effective work with patients and their families. Through June, a total of 237 nurses were trained in integrated management of childhood illness, including 41 in the Mary Welayat, 40 in the Dashoguz Welayat, 80 in the Balkan welayat, and 80 in the Lebap Welayat.

IMCI for nurses continues to be important in Turkmenistan as nurses are often the first point of contact within the health care system, especially in rural areas. IMCI trainings in Turkmenistan have been widely successful due to coordination between MOHMIT and ZdravPlus and Healthy Family projects, WHO and UNICEF for policy dialogue and provision of IMCI drugs.

The IMCI trainings for nurses were very successful. Participants were impressed with the interactive methods used during the training and especially liked the interpersonal communication skills component of the training module. Nurses were tested before and after their training experience, and their knowledge of IMCI increased by an average of 30%.

Nine more rollout trainings for nurses will be conducted in Balkan, Dashoguz, Ahal, Mary, and Lebap Welayats through September 2007.

This series of trainings is one of the many projects supported by the American people through USAID in Turkmenistan. Since 1993, the American people through USAID have provided over \$70 million in programs that help improve social services, expand access to information, and increase the development of market and agriculture. In health care sector, USAID supports the Government of Turkmenistan in its efforts to adopt international health care practices, implement programs for surveillance and prevention of infectious diseases and illnesses, such as malaria, TB, and HIV/AIDS.

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